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Message Text

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53
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 DOTE-00 FMC-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
AGRE-00 COME-00 /038 W
---------- 041481
R 081107Z DEC 76
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2830
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BGEN, EGEN, US, UR
SUBJ: PORT CONDITIONS AT LENINGRAD

1. SUMMARY. WE HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO TWO U.S. CAPTAINS IN PAST WEEK ON LENINGRAD PORT SITUATION. THEY REPORT TEMPORARY BUNKERING FUEL SHORTAGE AT PORT AND MINOR LABOR PROBLEMS; HOWEVER, THERE IS NO CONGESTION IN PORT. END SUMMARY.

2. CAPTAIN LEGRAND OF GULF KING, UNLOADING GRAIN HERE, TOLD US RECENTLY THAT LENINGRAD PORT CURRENTLY HAS SHORTAGE OF BUNKERING FUEL. CAPTAIN WAS TOLD BY INFLOT THAT HIS REQUEST FOR 2,000 BARRELS OF BUNKERING FUEL, WHICH HE REQUESTED BY CABLE 10 DAYS BEFORE ENTERING PORT, COULD NOT BE MET HERE DUE TO FUEL SHORTAGE AT PORT. ACCORDING INFLOT, SHORTAGE DUE TO FULL COMMITMENT OF BUNKERING FUEL ALLOTTED TO THE PORT DURING FINAL QUARTER OF THE YEAR. INFLOT ASSURED CAPTAIN THAT THE FUEL SITUATION WOULD RETURN TO NORMAL IN JANUARY AND ADVISED CAPTAIN TRY HIS LUCK IN RIGA WHERE GULF KING WILL BE OFF LOADING GRAIN IN NEAR FUTURE. INFLOT OFFICIALS SAID FUEL SITUATION RANGES WIDELY FROM PORT TO PORT AND NOT ALL PORTS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING SHORTAGE.

3. CAPTAIN OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, GENERAL CARGO VESSEL, EXPERIENCED FIVE DAY DELAY IN REACHING PIER BECAUSE OF LACK OF SPACE AND CAPTAIN ALSO COMPLAINED THAT INSUFFICIENT NUMBER WORK CREWS SLOWING DOWN OFF LOADING. AS RESULT HE SAID HIS TOTAL TURN
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AROUND TIME IN PORT LIKELY APPROACH 17 DAYS TO OFF LOAD

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3,700 TONS GENERAL CARGO (INCLUDING HARD TO HANDLE CURVED PIPE)
AND ONLOAD ADDITIONAL 3,000 TONS. GIVEN OFF LOADING /ON LOADING
RATE OF 1,000 TONS PER DAY, WHICH CAPTAIN SAID NORMAL HERE, TURN
AROUND TIME SHOULD HAVE BEEN CLOSER 7-10 DAYS. ON OTHER HAND,
GRAIN SHIP GULF KING ENTERED PORT WITH NO DELAY AND OFF LOADED
6,000 TONS GRAIN IN2-3 DAYS AT PIER.

4. WATERMAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY REP (BLOCH) WHO WAS PRESENT DURING
DISCUSSION WITH CAPTAIN OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, SAID HE COMPLAINING
TO LOCAL PORT OFFICIALS ABOUT EXCESSIVE PORT TIME FOR GENERAL
CARGO SHIPS. BLOCH REMARKED THAT DURING MASSIVE PILE UP AT PORT
IN JUNE-JULY, NECESSITATING WAITS OF 6 WEEKS OR MORE, HE HAD
NOTICED SOVIET VESSEL NOVGOROD BEING HANDLED OUT OF LINE AND
PROTESTED MATTER DIRECTLY TO MARITIME MINISTRY IN MOSCOW.
ACCORDING BLOCH, MINISTRY HAS BEEN VERY SYMPATHETIC AND IMMEDIATELY
DISPATCHED INVESTIGATING TEAM TO PORT WHICH RESULTED IN FIRING OF
OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR NOVGOROD INCIDENT AND GENERAL SHAKE
UP IN PORT OPERATIONS WHICH SUBSTANTIALLY IMPROVED PORT
SITUATION. BLOCH LAMENTED, HOWEVER, THAT THINGS GRADUALLY
SLIPPING INTO THE OLD SHAPE. HE ALSO COMPLAINED THAT UNLOADING
OF GENERAL CARGO SHIP AT PORT SUBSTANTIALLY SLOWER THAN GRAIN
SHIPS AND SAID THIS DUE TO PORT AUTHORITY DIRECTIVE GOING BACK
AT LEAST TO LAST SPRING TO GIVE PRIORITY LABOR AND RAIL CAR
HANDLING TO GRAIN SHIPS.
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